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ABSTRACT

The teacher preparation program in secondary reading described in this paper identifies several components for which teachers in training may be held accountable. The components identified include: (1) the selection of material of appropriate interest, reading level, and instructional need in keeping with lesson prototypes; (2) knowing the scope and sequence of word attack skills in relationship to individual pupil needs; (3) providing goal directed instruction stated in behavioral terms; (4) utilizing a diagnostic approach in identifying the reading needs of pupils; and (5) self-evaluation of the level of success attained in terms of learning goals and the lesson structures, or vehicles, through which these goals were to be achieved. Also discussed are the role of the college reading instructor when fostering accountability in his students, prototypic lessons, and promoting accountability in performance based teacher education. (Author/WR)

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Accountability and the Training of Secondary Teachers

Symposium XXII - Teacher Education

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Accountability and the Training of Secondary Teachers

The emphasis on Accountability in education is beginning to focus more sharply on teacher preparation programs in reading. Teacher training institutions have been criticized for inadequately preparing teachers to teach reading. In addition, "they fail to provide models of teaching which demonstrate individualized instruction."(3) The program description that follows is an attempt to respond to this criticism and centers upon: (1) the instructional reading tasks for which the teacher in training can be held accountable; and (2) the role of the college reading instructor in fostering the accountability of the teacher in training.

A tutorial reading program was devised at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville for pre-service secondary teachers in the fall semester of 1973. Twenty-one teachers were assigned as tutors to work in a local school district with junior high school

students enrolled in language arts classes. The seventh grade students were selected for the program by the language arts teacher, guidance counselor, and district reading consultant on the basis of average or above intelligence, regular class attendance, and reading deficiencies. The tutoring was conducted on a one to one basis at the junior high school during one of the student's regularly scheduled language arts periods and was continued weekly throughout the semester.

Instructional Program

Identifying Learning Goals. The initial class sessions were devoted to the establishment of reading goals. Information concerning deficits in comprehension, vocabulary, and word identification skills were obtained through an analysis of specific subtests in the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills(1) which had been administered in September of 1972. Further assessments of selected word identification skills were obtained utilizing the Wisconsin Tests of Reading Skill Development: Word Attack Levels C and D.(2) The college instructor introduced the format for each subtest and began the testing. Each teacher completed the subtest with a student on a one to one basis. The administrative procedure was the same for each successive subtest. Upon completion of the testing, which entailed two tutoring periods, a seminar period was scheduled to check test results. Those subtests, identified by the tutor, which fell below mastery level (80% accuracy) were arranged in a descending order of priority from highest to lowest. An item analysis was then conducted to ascertain the specific com-

ponents of each subtest which were most problematic.

After specific reading goals had been established, an informal reading inventory, which had been demonstrated by the college instructor, was administered by the teacher to each student to note functional reading levels. The identified instructional reading levels for the group ranged from third through fifth grade. An interest inventory was then administered which indicated a broad spectrum of reading tastes which would influence the selection of reading material for each tutoree.

Implementing Goals. During the initial instructional periods, the names of sample lesson materials were provided for tutors to use in teaching needed skills. The format of these specific materials provided guidelines for the selection of additional materials which would be used to overcome skill deficits to be treated in future lessons. Subsequent seminar periods were devoted to developing background in word attack skills, and the identification of lesson materials and their appropriateness for given instructional tasks.

Administration. The district reading consultant was an integral part of the college tutorial program particularly since she would need to support and continue skill development during the non-tutorial periods. Her shared involvement with the college instructor centered upon:

1. Reading lesson plans to note appropriate materials and teaching procedures.
2. Supervision of the teachers in training with their tutorees.

3. Providing communication through which the english teachers and pre-service teachers could exchange information and observations.

The demonstration lessons were provided by the college instructor during one of two seminar periods each week. Other topics such as test analysis, the informal reading inventory, skill clusters, instructional priorities, factors which contribute to reading disability, and lesson plans were also discussed and, when appropriate, demonstrated with students. The content of the seminar determined whether it would be conducted on the college campus or at the junior high school.

Lesson plans covering one hour of instruction were submitted by tutors for college instructor and/or reading consultant approval two days prior to their implementation. The plans emphasized aspects of vocabulary, phonics and/or structural analysis, and comprehension. A culminating activity, which included samplings of each of the lesson components, was used as a criterion measure at the end of each lesson. The activity was stated in behavioral terms and indicated an expected level of performance, e.g. 70% accuracy. Through this measure the teacher could evaluate the degree of success attained by the student in applying his newly acquired skills.

Because each lesson component was goal directed, including an indicated level of mastery, the effectiveness of the instruction was more easily determined by the supervisor. When the teacher had been supervised, it was noted that the immediate knowl-

edge of teaching results precipitated more meaningful questions for the supervisor concerning lesson sequence, materials, etc.

Knowledge of the teacher's instructional effectiveness, however, did not have to wait upon a conference with the supervisor. With behavioral criteria, a teacher may evaluate his or her own effectiveness. Consequently, decisions for change, when needed, were self motivated and more quickly effected.

Evaluation of the supervised, or unsupervised, lesson included a close look at the lesson's culminating activity. The teacher had an opportunity to take a "show me" attitude with the student. Specific skills and abilities had been presented during the initial part of each lesson. It was in the culminating activity that the teacher and/or supervisor noted the application of the instruction presented earlier. Through this activity, which was also stated in behavioral terms, the teacher determined whether the student could effectively use the skills, concepts, etc., that had been presented to him. As a result, decisions were made to review, reteach, or move on to new concepts and/or skills.

The Wisconsin Tests of Reading Skill Development: Word Attack were administered as a group assessment at the end of the semester to identify skill needs for future instruction. Pre and post test comparisons were made by each teacher to appraise the growth of the student with whom he had worked. Self-evaluation of teaching effectiveness was stressed during individual supervisor-tutor conferences.

Summary

The teacher preparation program in secondary reading described in this presentation identified several components for which teachers in training may be held accountable. They are as follows:

1. The selection of material of appropriate interest, reading level, and instructional need in keeping with lesson prototypes.
2. Knowing the scope and sequence of word attack skills in relationship to individual pupil needs.
3. Providing goal directed instruction stated in behavioral terms.
4. The ability to utilize a diagnostic approach in identifying the reading needs of pupils.
5. Self-evaluation of the level of success attained in terms of learning goals and the lesson structures, or vehicles, through which these goals were to be achieved.

The role of the college reading instructor changes considerably when fostering the accountability of his students. His efforts tend to focus upon prototypes, or sample lessons. These prototypic lessons may be demonstrations involving students which teach to specific skill needs, the administration of an informal reading inventory, or a presentation of sample materials from which lessons may be selected for a given skill or concept. Consequently, in order to promote accountability in performance based teacher education programs, the college instructor must also be able to perform the tasks and obtain the goals established for his preservice teachers.

References

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